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THE
Bishop of *Chichester's*
SERMON,
Preached before the
HOUSE of LORDS,
On *January* 31, 1731.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS



THE HOUSE OF LORDS

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the
House of LORDS,

IN THE
Abbey-Church at Westminster,

UPON
Monday, *January* 31, 1731.

Being the Day appointed to be kept as the Day of
the Martyrdom of

King CHARLES the First.

By FRANCIS ^{Le} Lord Bishop of *Chichester*.

Have
L O N D O N :

Printed by S. BUCKLEY in *Amen-Corner*. MDCCXXXI.

[Price Six - Pence.]

Die Martis, 1^o *Februarii*, 1731.

IT is Ordered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, That the Thanks of this House, be, and are hereby given to the Lord Bishop of *Chichester*, for the Sermon by him preached before this House Yesterday in the Abbey-Church, *Westminster*; and he is hereby desired to cause the same to be forthwith printed and published.



Wm. Cowper, Clerk Parliamentor:

L O N D O N :

Printed by S. BUCKLEY in Fleet-Street. [Price Six-Pence.]

PROV. XXIV. 21.

My Son, fear thou the LORD and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to Change.

AS the Use of History in general is to direct us in the Conduct of our Lives, and point out to us the Things we should follow or avoid, to promote either our own Happiness or the publick Welfare, in which our own is necessarily included ; so the solemn annual Commemorations of some Transactions are in a more particular Manner useful to the same good Purposes. But of all the Facts recorded in the *English* History, as no one is more execrable and impious than that we are this Day assembled in the House of God to express our humble and sincere Abhorrence of, so is none fuller of good and useful Lessons for our future Conduct, if duly and seriously attended to ; none can more strongly recommend to us the excellent Advice given in the Text, to *fear the LORD and the King, and not to meddle with them that are given to Change*. Had our Forefathers followed this Advice, the horrid Fact we this Day lament had not been committed ; nor can the like ever happen again, if their Posterity will have the Wisdom to take Warning from their Example.

To *fear the LORD*, is to serve him, and keep his Commandments, delivered in his holy Word ; and, to us Christians, it means in a more especial Manner to do the Will of God, as declared in the *New Testament* ; and, in Consequence of this, to profess and heartily embrace the Religion of Christ, and to be living Members of his Church ; and to believe and practise the Doctrines and Duties taught by him in the Scriptures, or by his Ministers agreeably thereto. This is to *fear the LORD*, suitably to the Advice given in the Text, as we are Christians. For as it is addressed to *Jews*, it is an Exhortation to them to be religious *Jews*, to be sincere in their Obedience and Worship of the God of *Israel*, as directed in the Law given to the *Jews*. For it is in the Text, *Fear the LORD*, that is, *Jehovah*, the God of *Israel*, in opposition to the gods of the Nations, the Worship of which was the great Sin which above all others they were warned against. But the Lord, the God of the *Jews*, is the God whom we *Christians* worship ; and therefore these Words, by Parity of Reason, when addressed to *Christians*, must mean to obey God as is directed in the Religion instituted by Christ, that is, in Spirit and in Truth, and to become living Members of Christ's mystical Body the Church ; which we can never be, but by living in Obedience to his Commands.

Now, as to *fear the LORD* is to obey God, and to obey God is to observe and practise the Religion taught us in his Word ; so to *fear the King*, is to obey the King, and observe his Commands : and that in a limited and legal Government is to observe the Laws, and pay the King the Obedience required by them : so that we have a certain Rule to direct us in our Obedience both to God and the King ; which leaves all Men without Excuse, who pretend Ignorance of their Duty to either. All Men have been taught their Duty to God from their Infancy, and have continually Teachers and Instructors in Righteousness ; and, that they may see what is commanded with their own Eyes, all have the Scriptures in their Hands. The same indeed can't be said of the Laws of the Land ; but yet the Want of sufficient Knowledge was never, I believe, made a Pretence for Disobedience in any flagrant Instances. Besides, that the Knowledge all have of the Duties commanded in the Gospel, in great Measure supplies the Defect of their Knowledge in the Laws, so far as concerns their Duty to the King ; since no body is so ignorant as not to know that Obedience to the *higher Powers* is in a very distinguishing Manner required in several Places in the *New Testament*. They therefore that sin in not obeying God and the King, sin against Knowledge, and so far are without Excuse.

Thus much may suffice to shew what is meant by fearing God and the King ; it is to be true to the holy Religion we profess, and to be good Subjects to the Government we live under, and pay the legal Obedience due to it. And the best Way to secure our Fidelity and Constancy in both these Duties, is not to *meddle with them that are given to change* ; to *change*, with respect either to God or the King, with respect to their Religion or the Government. These we are exhorted *not to meddle with*, not to mix or familiarly converse with, lest we be seduced by them from either of those Duties, either into Idolatry or Enthusiasm, Infidelity or Atheism, in Opposition to God's written Word ; or into Faction and Sedition, into Disloyalty or Rebellion against the Laws of the Land, and the Word of God both.

One of the best Preservatives in general against Vices of all kinds, is carefully to avoid bad Company, there being a strange Contagion in ill Example, and a specious and tempting Outside in every Vice, which flatters our Senses, and is but too agreeable to one or other of our Passions : So that ill Company, when they apply to our sensual Appetites and Passions, persuade almost as soon as heard. Every Vice has its Party, who make it their Business to seduce young People, by dressing it up in the most specious and attracting Colours, and representing its opposite Virtue to the greatest Disadvantage, and under all possible Discouragements. Vice, in their Account of it, is sociable and good-natured, 'tis Manliness and good Breeding, 'tis Pleasure and true Liberty. And young Minds lie so open to these Temptations, that they become an easy Prey, and greedily run into the Snares laid for them. Nothing but dear-bought Experience will convince them, that all Representations in Favour of Vice are
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meer Delusion; that the Pleasures they were flattered with, were false Pleasures, sweet indeed to the Mouth, but all Bitterness within; and that no two Things are at a wider Distance, than Liberty and Vice. Then they find, that the virtuous Man is the only happy Man, that to be a Servant to Righteousness is the most perfect Freedom, and that those who seduced them from their Virtue *while they promised them Liberty*, were themselves the Slaves of Sin, *the Servants of Corruption*.

But as every other Vice has its Advocates, to seduce unstable Minds, in which they are but too successful, thro' the Agreeableness of something there is in Vice to our corrupt Passions, and the Severity and Selfdenial there seems to be in the first Practice of most Virtues; so it is with Oppositions to Religion and Government. They in all Times have their Parties, and are zealously espoused, and industriously propagated, and among young People never want Proselytes. There are in every Nation, and at all Junctures, Men *given to change*, not only from Motives of Avarice or Ambition, from Disappointment or Revenge, or to mend a bad Fortune; but from Vanity and Self-conceit, from a Levity and Fickleness of Temper, from a scheming Head, and a Love of innovating in Religion and Government for Innovating-sake, for some Men are against every thing that is uppermost, and seem to dislike what is established, merely because it is so. Such Men are ever busy in making Converts, and as their own Heads are turned, so they easily turn the young Heads that listen to them, by the plausible and specious Things they have to offer, which can never be wanting in Things of so complicated a Nature as Religion and Government. For what Religion, I mean what Establishment of Religion, what Church in any Country is so perfect, as not to leave room for finding fault? What Forms of Worship so complete and unexceptionable, what Discipline so well framed or so well executed, what System of Faith and Doctrines so wisely drawn up, where is there a national Clergy so well qualified by Virtue and Learning for their Business, so pious, so prudent, so diligent in the Discharge of their Offices, as to leave no Place for Exceptions, for Objections, for Scruples, for Censure, for Reproach? Men *given to change* cannot only find Faults where there are any, but where there are none; they will aggravate the smallest Failures, and magnify very little Defects or Imperfections into essential and capital Offences. Much less can we expect Candor and Fairness, Equity or Charity from such Men, or that they should connive at any real Faults or Imperfections; which yet in the Nature of Things it is absolutely necessary we should, unless Men would be eternally out of Humour. For nothing can be contrived so perfect, that it will not carry in it the Marks of human Frailty. But if our Constitution with respect to Religion, were in all Parts so well formed, as to have nothing in it that could fairly be excepted to, that will not satisfy these Men; 'tis Objection enough against the Religion of their Country, either that they can fancy something more perfect, or that it does not leave them enough at Liberty; and that is a sufficient Reason for them to endeavour the Extirpation of it.

Men, who have in them a Tincture of Enthusiasm, are very apt to be seduced with Pretences to a more perfect Way of Worship ; and when once seduced, are always restless and impatient ; they will run any Lengths to carry their Point, to advance what they are so passionately fond of: 'Tis, they think, the Cause of God, which allows no Delays, admits of no Restraints ; Times and Places, and Persons and Things, must all give Way to what the Enthusiast calls the Work of God, and thinks to be the Dictate of his Spirit. Thus, to serve God, they trample upon all the Laws both of God and Man, which are but a dead Letter when they stand in their Way, and were not intended, they think, to be a Rule to the Saints. 'Tis very surprizing, as well as afflicting, to see, what a Frenzy of Enthusiasm poor ignorant Men have been work'd up to by specious Pretences to a purer Religion, or a more exalted Devotion, and thro' a blind Zeal to advance what they call the *Kingdom of Christ*. And what makes this more afflicting is, that they are work'd up to this Madness by Men who don't believe themselves a Word of what they say, by Men who are themselves the vilest Hypocrites, void of all true Virtue and Religion.

When such Men can't ruin the Established Religion this Way, then they set up for zealous Asserters of the Rights of Subjects in Religious Matters, and declare loudly for an absolute Exemption from all Authority whatever, as an Invasion of their Liberty ; fault is found first with the Teachers of Religion, then with what is taught ; the Law of Nature is cry'd up in Opposition to the Christian Revelation, and all Restraint upon Licentiousness is Priest-Craft. And there is something so specious in Liberty, particularly in what relates to Faith and Conscience, that Delusions of this Kind easily pass upon the Multitude, especially upon the raw and unexperienced Part of them. By the plausible Pretences and artful Insinuations of such Men, great Numbers are made Enemies first to the Established Religion, and, from a Disaffection to that, are by Degrees brought to a dislike of all Religion, and in the End become meer Infidels.

So dangerous is it to mix with Men *given to Change*, with regard to Religion ; and what makes the Evils of this kind greater, Men who are of a restless, turbulent, factious Temper with respect to Government, are always ready to join in their Complaints against the Religion Established, and in their Endeavours to seduce Men from it. The Established Religion and the Established Government are in their Constitution and Interests so interwoven and linked together, that they who would subvert the Government, have no surer Way to compass their wicked Ends, than by endeavouring to ruin the Church first. The greatest Strength of the Government ever did and ever will lye in the Fidelity and Affection of the Members of the Established Church : As the Government knows this to be true, so do its Enemies, who therefore are as ready by all Artifices and Attempts to weaken it, as our Governors can be to favour and protect it.

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Which leads me to consider the Opposition of Men *given to Change*, with respect to Government, and the Mischief of the Poison they infuse where they are hearkened to. There is no Question on which Men can argue more plausibly on any Side, than this of Government; a great deal may be said for and against every Form that the Wit of Man has or can invent, as all know who are at all conversant in this Subject. But besides the Differences in the several Forms, whether simple or mixt, considered abstractedly and in Theory, one Form of Government is more proper than another for this or that Nation; and in this Question many Things must be considered, the Genius of the People, the Extent of their Dominion, the Situation and Dispositions of the several Nations bordering upon them. This makes it a very complicated Question, and exceeding difficult many Times to form a true Judgment, what Species of Government, all Things consider'd, is certainly the best for a People, if they had it in their Choice: And the Men who are *given to Change*, can never want Arguments for disliking that they live under, and giving the Preference to some other, tho' they are morally sure it can't take Place without throwing Things into great Confusion; for that Changes of Government are almost unavoidably attended with; so that wise and good Men would rather acquiesce in any Form, than attempt a Change at so great Hazard, for one that would be better; but what would certainly be so, that, as I have observed, is often hard to say.

But if every Form of Government were in itself equally good, or it were allowed that no one is better, for us at least, than that we find ourselves under, (which I think can never be disproved,) yet Men *given to Change* can always find Matter for Complaints, and to represent it in a disadvantageous Light. For since every Form is imperfect, and has its Inconveniences, such Men will consider it on that Side only, while the Advantages of some other Form shall be greatly magnified, and its Imperfections denied or studiously concealed. And if young Men will hearken to such Seducers, many will be captivated, from an Inability to compare Things of so intricate a Nature impartially together, which they are not knowing enough to do, and often times not willing enough. For they feel the Inconveniences of the Government they are under; their Senses tell them that, and their Reason is not a Balance for their Senses; they are not able to see how much they are imposed on, the Form recommended to them being in Theory all Perfection. But all Men of Sense know the Difference there is between Theory and Practice; Experience tells them, that many Things which made a fine Appearance while in Speculation only, and as yet untried, prove quite other Things when reduced to Practice, and an Experiment is made of them; then they are sometimes found to be chimerical and impracticable, and always attended with Difficulties and Imperfections which were not foreseen.

But besides the Imperfections that necessarily attend all Forms of Government, and which are felt by those only who are the Subjects of them, all Governments are found to be imperfect more or less, from the Imperfections

of those by whom they are administered, and the many Difficulties all Administrations are attended with ; so that there hardly ever was a Time when Men disposed to find Fault, could not furnish out a Catalogue of Grievances. Men of this Complexion have shewn themselves so dextrous, that they can at any time take either Side of any Question, from which they are never restrained by any Regard to Modesty or Truth, and harangue plausibly enough to inflame an unthinking Multitude. We have seen for Years together so much of this ill Spirit, by which contrary Measures, so long as they were opposite to those taken by the Government, have been warmly espoused and plausibly recommended to the People, that I need not say more to explain the Artifices of Men *given to Change*, and to shew how easy it is to find Fault, and to draw the Multitude by specious Arguments into a Dislike of any Thing. The Men of this Turn are the Pests of all Governments, and the Misfortune is, that they swarm most in the best, in those that in the Constitution of them are the mildest, and the most indulgent to the Subject ; that is, where they can take these Liberties with least Hazard to themselves.

But if all Governments in their very Forms, and in the ordinary Administration of them, are liable to the Insults and Clamours of such Men, and unavoidably furnish Matter for them, what Mischief may not be apprehended from them in distemper'd Times, when the People are prepared to their Hand to receive the worst Impressions, in an Agitation and Ferment from whatever Cause, and ready to take Fire upon the first Occasion ? Then serious and good Men have the greatest Reason to be upon their Guard, and to preserve both themselves and others, as far as they can, from the Contagion of Men who are watching for a *Change*, and lie in wait to deceive, and to seduce the People from the Obedience which both Reason and Religion have taught them is due to the *Higher Powers*, and by the strongest Ties have bound on them : Since there is no knowing where to stop, or what Extravagancies they may not be gradually work'd up to, in following the Seductions of such Guides, who will never be quiet till they have carried Things to Extremity, and subverted the Constitution, which at first perhaps they pretended to be zealous Friends to, and wanted only to rectify what was a Deviation from it, and to restore it to its true and original Perfection. For it may be observed of these Men that are *given to Change*, with respect both to Religion and Government, that in their first Attempts to make Converts they usually conceal with the utmost Caution their true Intentions, and pretend much Piety and Loyalty, great Concern for the Established Religion and Government ; and intend nothing, if you will believe them, but the true Service of God and the King : They find fault only with ill Ministers in Church or State, oppose nothing but Male-Administration in them ; and to prevent that is the best Service that can be done to either. Thus they begin, but it is not here they mean to end ; they censure this and that and t'other, and a fourth and fifth and sixth Thing, and so on, till nothing at last is left ; the whole Constitution, with respect both to Religion and Government, is demolished

demolished under Pretences of amending only and reforming Abuses crept into them.

The Truth of this is sadly verified in the History of those ill Times, which gave Occasion to the mournful Solemnity of this Day, on which we are assembled to humble ourselves before God for the crying Sins of our Fore-Fathers, which brought so much Distress upon this Nation, and ended in the most flagrant Crime a Nation could be guilty of; a Crime which can't be forgot, and which yet we can't remember, tho' at the Distance of so many Years, without Shame and great Confusion. For if Murder in general, the Murder of a single private Man, is so odious in the Sight of God, as we are sure it is, much more detestable in his Sight is the Murder of Persons of Publick Character; much more will he require the Blood of Kings of the Land where it is unjustly shed; since these are complicated Crimes, and their People are in some Sort murder'd in them. But much more odious still must this Crime be in the Sight of God, when in Violation of all Laws, Human and Divine, it is committed under all the Forms and Solemnities of Publick Justice, as a Service acceptable to God, and for the Preservation or Advancement of his Honour. But such was the Crime we this Day lament, on which not only Innocent but Royal Blood was spilt by the villainous Hands of his own Subjects, with all the solemn Forms of a legal Tryal, and under Pretence of Zeal for God, and for preserving the Liberties and Properties of the People; but in truth to the Destruction of all their ancient and legal Rights, and to the high Dishonour of the *Holy One*. The whole Constitution both of Church and State, of which the King was Head, was by the same fatal Blow destroy'd with him.

I shall not enter into a History of those unhappy Times, or trace out the several Steps of those Transactions, which, after a long Rebellion, were at last brought to so infamous an End. I will not say there had been no Occasions given on the Part of the Court for Jealousies and Fears, or that there was not sufficient Reason for Opposition in a Parliamentary Way to the then Measures; but I think, in Justice to the King, it may be truly said, there was no Necessity for fomenting those popular Tumults the Troubles began with, much less for having Recourse to Arms, and involving the Nation in all the Calamities of a Civil War, and least of all for carrying Things to such an Extremity, as to take away the King's Life; which must always, and always will be looked on by all indifferent Persons, by all the Nations round about us, as a most infamous and execrable Action.

Whatever wrong Measures had been taken, which might endanger the Liberties of the Subject, (tho' what was most offensive of this Kind was done by the Advice of his Council, with the Concurrence of all his Judges, Judges in general of good Character and well-esteem'd in their Profession) the King not only shewed the greatest Disposition to give his People all possible Satisfaction by the most solemn Declarations, that he *would govern by the known Laws of the Land, and maintain the just Rights and Privileges of Parliaments*; but gave the greatest Proof of his being so disposed, by giving the Royal Assent

Affent to Bills of the greatest Importance to the Crown, as fast as they could be prepared for it. He gave up entirely those Branches of the Prerogative, which were most liable to be made an arbitrary Use of; and denied nothing that could be asked, not only to secure the Liberties and Rights of the Subject, but to allay even the most unreasonable Fears, could any thing have done it, less than giving up every Thing that belong'd to the Crown, which could make him a King more than in Name. In short, he made so many and such great Concessions, that nothing more could by Men in any Temper be thought necessary to remove all Jealousies, and restore a good Harmony between him and his People; at least they had no Reason to fear, that a Prince who had yielded such great Points would stick at smaller Things, or refuse any Thing really wanted to give entire Satisfaction. But the Distempers of the Times were such, Men's Passions were so inflamed, artful and designing Men had work'd up the Fears and Jealousies of the People to that Height, that nothing would satisfy but an Act empowering the Parliament to sit as long as they should judge it necessary: And even this for Peace sake, and to prevent the Mischiefs that were but too justly apprehended from the Ferment the Nation was then in, the good King consented to; by which, in effect, he unkinged himself, which it was then feared by his Friends would be the Consequence, and those Fears the Event confirmed.

This was such a Concession as no King would have made, who was not most sincerely disposed to do every Thing that was reasonable to quiet the publick Discontents, and willing to hope others, after his Example, would be as sincere on their Part, and be in some Measure true to the many Professions they had made of their Loyalty, and good Affection to his Person and Government. But how little Sincerity there was in those Professions, all that followed is too sad a Proof.

What gives this Condescension of the King's all the Weight that can be, as an Argument of his Sincerity, is, that as it was in it self the greatest Proof he could give, so it was done at the Beginning of the Troubles, and before his Affairs can be said to have put him under a Necessity of doing it. And after his Parliament had made so ill an Use of this great Power, as to involve the Nation in a War, they might at any Time have put an End to it upon the most advantageous Terms, if some had not been too much heated to hearken to any Accommodation; others, conscious they had offended too much to be forgiven; and lastly, others determined to be satisfied with nothing less than a total Change of the ancient Constitution, and the Introduction of a Common Wealth. For the King in the Times of his greatest Success, was always willing to put an end to the Effusion of Blood by a Treaty, and to make such Concessions as were below the Majesty of a King, and which nothing could justify but the Concern he had for the publick Peace and Welfare, to which he was always ready to sacrifice his own most valuable Rights. Nay at last, to put an end to the Confusions and Calamities the Nation had so long groaned under, he consented to such Terms as the Parliament itself voted to be *good Grounds for a safe and lasting Peace*; that Parliament, which
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by their unreasonable Demands had made all former Treaties ineffectual, and had carried Things to that Extremity, as to make it Treason for any one to *make any farther Application to his Majesty as King*. But their Servants were then become their Masters, and those who were at the Head of their Armies were resolved upon a Change of Government. This was the Reason, that Treaty had not its desired Effect ; not that the King was not sincere, or did not yield enough ; but because those who had the Sword in their Hands, had taken their Resolution, and would not, by any Considerations of Honour or Justice, be diverted from it. The King must be put to Death, that is, in their Language, *have Justice done upon him* : But before they could destroy him, they were forced to destroy the very Parliament that gave them the Powers they acted by ; they secluded by open Violence the major Part of the Members, and left no Shadow of a Parliament but in a Remnant of *Forty Six*, who had dissented from the rest in the great Vote of the King's Concessions being good Grounds for a Peace. Without this monstrous Step they could not compass their infamous Design against the King's Life ; which he so little thought even those Men capable of, notwithstanding the many Indignities put upon him, that he refused the most probable Methods of Escape, which during his Confinement had been proposed to him. Which was another plain Argument of his own Sincerity and Greatness of Mind both ; he was resolved to keep the Word he had given, and would hope his Enemies had too much Honour to break theirs, who had given repeated Assurances in the Face of all the World, of the Safety of his Person.

Lastly, To mention no other Proofs of his Sincerity and good Intentions to his People, his Trial and Death were undergone with that *Christian* Meekness, Patience, Resignation and Fortitude, as are inimitable by any one who is not thoroughly convinc'd of the Righteousness of his Cause, and the Uprightness of his Heart ; who takes not God for his Help, and puts his Confidence in him. Such was his Behaviour and Constancy in this last black Scene, that he did nothing unbecoming a good King, nothing below a great one.

Such was the King they murder'd ; nor were his Adherents unworthy the greatest Prince or the best Cause. They were not only the Attendants of his Court, or such as had a Dependence on him ; who either had received or expected Favours from him ; they were not mercenary Creatures, who could easily be bribed to betray their Country, or could hope to raise themselves upon the Ruins of it, or would give up the Constitution and the Laws to the Will and Pleasure of an absolute Prince ; they were no Friends to Popery or arbitrary Power ; they were the Nobility and chief Gentry of the Nation : These were the King's Friends, who adhered to him in all his Distresses ; these commanded his Armies, or rather composed them, and served as private Men in their Persons, while they supported him with their Fortunes. And many of them sealed with their Blood the Justice of his Cause, not only in the Field, but by suffering shameful and ignominious Deaths by the Sentence of merciless and cruel Men, who delighted in Blood ; the nobler it was, the sweeter the Revenge ; till at last they embrewed their Hands in that of their King.

These were such Adherents, as carry with them the greatest Weight in Proof of the Goodness of the Cause they espoused. They could have no Interest separate from that of their Country ; they had themselves the greatest Share of Property, and consequently the strongest Inducement to keep from their Necks the heavy Yoke of arbitrary Power, to which in every Country the Nobility are the first Sacrifice. As they had the greatest Estates to preserve to themselves and their Posterity, so it may be presumed they had the best Education, and understood the Constitution, the Laws of their Country, and the Rights both of Prince and People, better than the lower Part of the Nation, much better than the Populace can be supposed to do, or the factious Leaders at the Head of them. The Nobility and principal Gentry of a Nation are certainly the fittest Judges of its true Interests, and the best Conservers of its Liberties ; and nothing but a turbulent and factious Spirit can tempt Men to raise Jealousies and Fears against a Government under which they are easy, or to have Recourse to Arms, when they don't think such violent Methods necessary. The Body of the People may be sure their Religion and Properties are both safe, when those who are Persons of the greatest Honour, and have most to lose, and are best able to judge of publick Affairs, are on the Prince's Side. But this was the King's Case long before his Affairs were grown desperate ; from whence we may certainly conclude, he was far from deserving those black and odious Characters with which his Enemies have loaded him.

I might illustrate and confirm what has been said in Vindication of the King, by giving you a View of those who were the most violent against him ; but I have no Inclination to enter into so disagreeable a Subject ; that Generation is long since passed, and the great Actors in that wicked Scene are gone to answer for themselves at the Tribunal of the most high God. I shall only say, that besides those factious and seditious Spirits who took Occasion from those Troubles to throw things into all the Confusion they could to serve their own vile Ends, there were many full of visionary Schemes of a perfect Government, and possessed with Republican Notions to a Degree of Enthusiasm. These Men were resolved on a Change of Government at any Rate, and, in order to it, to destroy the King. This was well known in those Times, and is delivered down to us in their own Books, which makes the Truth of it undeniable. They confess they were not so much against the Monarch as the Monarchy ; it was not against *Charles* they had fought, but the King ; and that if they must have a King, they might as well have kept him they had. This was the Sense not only of many, but of the chief of them : Others indeed were far enough from such Principles ; they disliked nothing in Kingly Power but that it was not in their own Hands, and meant nothing by putting the King and his Friends out, but to thrust themselves in. This was the Case of the insolent *Usurper*, who after all his pretended Zeal for Liberty, was not content with the Power of a King, unless he had the Name too ; and never could forgive his most intimate Associates because they would not come into it. But
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both Sorts of Men shew'd sufficiently how unfit they were to oppose a King for aiming at an arbitrary Government ; never Men practised themselves what they pretended to condemn in him, in so barefaced and impudent a Manner. There was so much Injustice, Violence, and Oppression ; so much Arbitrariness and Cruelty in their Proceedings, accompanied with the vilest Hypocrisy and Falshood, as is not to be parallel'd in History among any Sett of Men pretending to Justice and Equity, and to preserve Liberty and Property, together with Piety and pure Religion. Their Inhumanity in War, their illegal Proceedings upon Tryals, their voting down the House of Lords, their secluding and turning out great Numbers of the Commons, their garbling the Army, their Breach of Faith to the King so often given, and their infamous Prostitution of Religion to cover all these Iniquities, are such Evidences of the Spirit they acted with, as plainly shew it was not the Cause of God they were engaged in, or that an ill Cause they were against.

I need not say after this, that those who were such Enemies to the State were no Friends to the Church. The Church was always true to the King, and they had little Hopes of succeeding in their Designs against him as long as that stood ; and therefore their main Strength was in the first Place levelled against that Part of the Constitution. And had not the King been resolute in the Defence of it, thro' a hearty Concern for the Honour of God, and the Preservation of true Religion, as well as thro' a prudent Foresight of what was meant by the furious Zeal that appeared against it, he might have had a Peace, a dishonourable and insecure one, when he would. Would he have sacrificed his Conscience to his present Interest and Necessities, and been willing his Throne should have stood on the Ruins of the Church, his Murderers would have been content, for some Time at least, to have held their Hands, and to have destroyed the Monarchy by slower Degrees ; but destroyed sooner or later it would have been, had the Principles of these Men prevailed ; and so it always will be. Our Government is so constituted, that the Ruin of one Part will most certainly draw that of the other after it. The great Fault of the King was, that he loved the Church ; and the Church must be ruined, because it will not desert the King.

The Pretence indeed was pure Religion and a farther Reformation ; Prelacy and Popery were rung in the Ears of the People without ceasing, till they were worked up to an incredible Degree of Infatuation and Enthusiasm, for which they were not a little disposed by the Ferment that had been long working. The indiscreet Zeal of the Friends of the Church, and the Severity with which they pressed a Compliance in Things indifferent, or of small Consequence, upon Persons of different Persuasions, whose Aversion to a Compliance increased in Proportion to the Zeal with which it was pressed, prepared the Fuel for that unhappy Fire which then broke out with so much Fury. The warm Heads of the lower People were full of Reformation, they thought every Injunction in Church Matters an Infringement of *Christian Liberty* ;

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they could bear nothing that had any Resemblance to what was practised in the Church of *Rome*; every thing they did not like was *Popery*, and *Popery* was *Antichrist*, and that sanctified all the Vows that could be made for its Destruction; it was the Cause of God. And cunning Men knew how to make their Advantage of this Madness of the Populace, to effect the Subversion of an Establishment, which they knew the Crown would always find true to it, and zealous in its Defence; which made it necessary for them to destroy it, since, while this Obstacle was in their Way, they could not easily destroy the King.

They succeeded in both these Attempts, but soon found they had little Reason to rejoyce in their Success. As their Crime in putting the King to Death was without Example, so were the horrible Confusions, which both in the Nature of things, and by the just Judgment of God followed upon it in a Course of many Years, till the Government and Church they had destroyed were by a wonderful Providence both restored. This makes it highly reasonable we should, in the most solemn Manner, express our Detestation and Abhorrence of so execrable an Action, and deprecate the Divine Vengeance, that God would not visit upon us this great Iniquity of our Forefathers, and those other national Sins which provoked God to give them up to such strong Delusions.

But it will be said, What is this to us? Why should we observe a Day of Fasting and Humiliation for a Fact committed above Fourscore Years ago, and which no body now alive could possibly be any Way concerned in? I answer, That the Judgments of God for great Sins may hang over a Nation for many Generations; and therefore it may be still our Concern to deprecate the Wrath of God for so heinous a Pollution of the Land. But there are other Reasons for such Commemorations; Men may be guilty now as truly as their Forefathers were then; they may consent *ex post facto*, and approve a Crime when it is done, and by that Means make themselves as guilty in the Sight of God, as if themselves had had a Hand in it, or had actually been consenting to it. But further, such Solemnities are of great Use to keep up by this Means a Sense of Duty to God and the King, and to excite in the People a just Abhorrence of such great and flagrant Sins. And I wish I could not say, there is in the present Age but too much Cause to think this necessary; for tho' the Men are gone who perpetrated this horrid Fact, the Spirit still remains. We see all Places filled with loose Books which tend to nothing but to destroy all Principles, and set Men free from all Government; and those who can't write yet think their Tongues their own, and take an unbounded Liberty in speaking Evil of those whom God has set over them. Republican Principles are as industriously propagated now as they were then, tho' perhaps more covertly, and to the same Ends: 'Tis to introduce a Change of Government, and in order to that to weaken it, by weakning first the Influences of Religion, and introducing Infidelity; which Attempts come chiefly from the Republican Quarter now, as they did then. *

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* Many of the Republicans began to profess Deism: And almost all of them were for destroying all Clergy-men, and for breaking every thing that looked like the Union of a National Church. They were for pulling down the Churches, for discharging the Tithes, and for leaving Religion free, as they called it, without either Encouragement or Restraint. *Burnet's Hist. p. 67.*

These were the Beginnings of the late Troubles, which ended in the Ruin both of Church and State ; and a just Fear lest the same evil Seeds should grow up to the same prodigious Wickedness, and effect again the same Mischiefs, abundantly justifies the Conduct of our Governors in causing this Day to be still duly and solemnly observed.

'Tis not indeed so easy now for the disaffected to play over the same Game with the same Success. The Monarchy is now so limited and bounded by Laws, that it is not in the Power, no more than it is in the Will, of the Prince now upon the Throne, to give the same Provocations that were given then ; by which the Crown, however weakened in Appearance, is in Reality more firmly established : And those who are *given to Change* cannot have the same Opportunities to create Jealousies and Misunderstandings now they had before. Nor have the Enemies of our Church the same Pretences for raising Clamours against it, as they had in those unhappy Days. They have not indeed now the same Matter to work upon ; that wild Spirit of Enthusiasm is long since laid, and 'tis not, I am persuaded, in the Power of Man to raise the same again ; and consequently there is not the same Scope for Hypocrisy and a pretended Zeal for a more pure Religion, to exert itself with the like Hopes of Success. But if there were, those Handles for Clamour are now removed ; the unhappy Disputes about some Church-Matters of little Moment, which were then carried so high on one Side, and were so warmly opposed on the other, disturb not the present Times ; and the Indulgence granted by Law to scrupulous Consciences has taken away all vexatious Prosecutions for Non-conformity, and no Room is left to complain of Persecution. So that, were we to judge of the Safety of our Religion and Government from the Want of Handles given to disturb them, we should be in no Apprehension of Danger to either from what turbulent and factious Men can do.

And yet such Men we daily see incessantly at Work ; they take Handles where none are given, and the Nation never was so pester'd with Libels against both the Established Religion and Established Government, as it is at present ; which, where it will end, I dread to think. Whatever Good some Men may think there is in this Licentiousness, sure I am there is great Evil in it ; and so have all Governments, and the freest States, ever thought in all Times. 'Tis what, in my Apprehension, no Government, be it ever so wisely constituted, or ever so well administr'd, can long subsist under. Every Government, in a certain Number of Years, is by one Incident or other distressed in its Affairs : When such a Juncture finds a People greatly divided among themselves, and alienated in their Affections by perpetual Libels from one another, and from their Governors ; what can that Government do in its own Defence, or the Defence of the Nation, against a Foreign Enemy, much more against a Pretender to the Crown, when its truest Strength is gone, the Affections of the People, and a hearty Union among themselves ?

For we can't but observe, that under a Republican Spirit there lurks one very different. The Men who are so loud for Liberty upon the Republican Scheme are joined by a Party of Men who mean nothing less than what in Appearance they are so zealous for. They act by Direction from another Quarter, and to serve another Cause; 'tis for that they endeavour to weaken the King at Home, and to expose him Abroad; 'tis to bring in a Power destructive of the Religion and Liberty of their Country, that they espouse so warmly the Cause of Liberty, and join with Men of quite different Principles: Which makes it more than ordinarily necessary in these Times for the Friends of the Government to be vigilant, and take Care that they be not deluded into a Security that may prove fatal to them. I wish those whom it more properly concerns would lay this to Heart, and provide some Remedy for so great an Evil before it be too late.

In the mean Time, let all who are well affected to our Constitution in Church and State, and who have a just Abhorrence of the impious Murder we are this day assembled to lament, declare openly their own Innocence, and that they no Way approve the Principles or Practices that led to it. Let us have no Communication with those that *are given to Change*, and would draw us off from our Duty to God and the King. Since the Irreligion of these Times is owing to the Hypocrisy of those, and the same factious Spirit is still alive, and not only alive but very active, let us be careful to be upon our Guard against it. Let us consider well, before we begin to give into Measures against the Government, where it is most probable they will end: Let us remember the late Troubles were begun, and all along carried on by Men who had bound themselves in the most solemn *Manner to defend the King's Person and Authority; that the World might bear Witness with their Consciences of their Loyalty, and that they had no Thoughts or Intention to diminish his just Power and Greatness.*

This was the Language of the Covenant; in which, among other things, they engaged *for the Honour and Happiness of the King's Majesty and his Posterity.* And at last, when he was delivered into their Hands by those to whose Faith he had unhappily trusted himself, the strongest Assurances were given for the Safety of his Person. Let us remember this, and in what these Assurances and Engagements ended. Let us remember, that, notwithstanding all our high Notions of Liberty, we are the Servants of God, and the Subjects of the King; and that will teach us what Behaviour and Demeanour towards both best becomes us. Let us be serious and constant in the Duties prescribed by the excellent Religion we profess; and readily and chearfully pay that Obedience to the King, which both our Religion and our Laws require of us. Let us preserve inviolably a due Reverence to his sacred

cred Person, and yield a willing Submission to his Government, and do every thing in our Power, to make him as happy in his Subjects, as his Subjects are in him; who has no Interest separate from that of his People, no Views but to promote their Welfare, no Glory but in their Prosperity. That he may long reign in the Hearts of an obedient People, and that the Happiness we enjoy under his Government may be continued to our latest Posterity by a Succession of wise and virtuous Princes descended from him, and ruling by his Example over faithful and good Subjects, *GOD of His infinite Mercy grant through Jesus Christ, our Lord. To whom, &c.*

F I N I S.

